

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 04265 280503Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----115206 280507Z /15
O 271508Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8936

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 4265

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, LE, US
SUBJECT: IMPACT OF US E & E PLANNING ON LEBANESE SITUATION

1. DURING MEETING WITH FONMIN BOUTROS AT ONE O'CLOCK LOCAL
JULY 27, I SHOWED HIM A BRIEF ANNOUNCEMENT FOR US CITIZENS
WHICH WE HAD DRAFTED AND WHICH I WAS CONSIDERING GIVING TO THE
PRESS THAT AFTERNOON. ANNOUNCEMENT READ AS FOLLOWS:

"THE AMERICAN EMBASSY IN BEIRUT SUGGESTS THAT
AMERICAN CITIZENS WHO DO NOT HAVE BUSINESS IN
LEBANON SHOULD LEAVE AT THEIR EARLIEST CON-
VENIENCE. EMBASSY OFFICE HOURS REMAIN 8:00 A.M.
TO 4:30 P.M. MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY."

2. THIS NOTICE HAS ALREADY BEEN POSTED ON THE BULLETIN BOARD
OF THE AREA IN THE CONSULAR SECTION WHICH AMERICANS SEEKING
CONSULAR SERVICES VISIT, AND THE NOTICE HAS BEEN CIRCULATED
ORALLY THROUGH THE KEY MEMBERS OF THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY.

3. BOUTROS' REACTION ON READING DRAFT WAS TO CLAP HIS
HAND TO HIS FOREHEAD AND STATE THAT THE PUBLICATION OF SUCH
A NOTICE IN THE PRESS WOULD CAUSE PANIC. HE ALSO APPEARED TO
BE GENUINELY SURPRISED THAT THIS WAS OUR REACTION TO THE
OUTBREAK OF FIGHTING IN HADATH. HE ASKED THAT WE AT
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LEAST WAIT UNTIL FORTHCOMING VISIT OF SYRIAN FONMIN KHADDAM,
WHO EXPECTED BEGINNING OF NEXT WEEK AND HELD OUT HOPE THAT
SOMETHING WOULD BE ARRANGED WITH HIM TO DEFUSE SITUATION.
I SAID I WOULD HOLD NOTICE TEMPORARILY. WE AGREED TO KEEP
IN TOUCH.

4. LEBANESE PERMREP TO UN TUENI AND GEORGE ASSEILLY WITH

WHOM I LUNCHEDED IMMEDIATELY AFTER SEEING BOUTROS, BOTH EXPRESSED CONCERN WHEN I MENTIONED THE PROPOSED ANNOUNCEMENT TO THEM AND THOUGHT THAT IT MIGHT WELL CAUSE A PANIC; HOWEVER, THEYDID NOT SEEK TO DISSUADE ME FROM ISSUING IT.

5. COMMENT: IN DECIDING WHETHER OR NOT TO ISSUE THE NOTICE, I MUST TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE POSSIBILITY THAT IT COULD INDEED TRIGGER A STAMPEDE AMONG THE LEBANESE WHICH WOULD PREVENT THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY FROM AVAILING ITSELF OF FACILITIES FOR AN ORDERLY DEPARTURE. MANY LEBANESE WOULD TAKE THE FORMAL PUBLICATION OF SUCH A NOTICE IN THEIR PRESS AS AN INDICATION THAT THE AMERICANS HAD GIVEN UP THE GAME HERE AND THAT THEREFORE "ALL IS LOST". IT IS POSSIBLE THAT WE CAN ACCOMPLISH OUR PURPOSE OF GETTING THE WORD OUT BY EXPANDING OUR PRESENT OPERATION USING THE TELEPHONE.
PARKER

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